

CHAPTER IV  
RETAILING IN DOWNTOWN SMITHFIELD

In the last chapter we explained why particular kinds of activities are appropriate for downtown locations. Activities which are appropriate include those which serve a wide area and which generate interaction with other downtown activities. Retailing\* is a typical downtown function; most kinds of retailing are appropriate downtown functions, and these kinds of retailing generate much of the network of interaction. Retailing is the largest single category in terms of floor space occupied, both in downtown Smithfield and in most other small and medium size cities' downtown areas. Retailing is also the major activity category whose prospects for growth or continued prosperity in a downtown location are questionable. For these reasons we will concentrate particular attention on this sector of the downtown economy, first tracing the recent history of retailing in Smithfield and Johnston County, and then quantitatively projecting the observed trends to 1980.

The Census of Business data in the table opposite provides an over-all impression of changes in Smithfield's retail trade. It should be noted that these data apply to the City of Smithfield, including but not limited to the downtown, and that they do not include Business and Consumer Services, for which the data are less satisfactory. Since most of Smithfield's retail trade is downtown, and since trends in service

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\* We will use the terms "retailing" and "retailing and commercial services" interchangeably, to denote not only the sale of goods at retail but also similar personal service and business service activities, such as beauty shops and credit bureaus, except when used in connection with Census data.